DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 357 021 SP 034 472

AUTHOR Beacham, Betty G.; And Others
TITLE A University and Public School Collaborative Approach to Preparing Elementary Teachers.
PUB DATE 92
NOTE 7p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Clinical Supervision (of Teachers); *College School Cooperation; Collegiality; Cooperating Teachers; Demonstration Programs; Elementary Education; Higher Education; Preservice Teacher Education; *Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Public Schools; School Districts; *Student Teachers; Student Teacher Supervisors
IDENTIFIERS *Collaboratives; East Carolina University NC; *Reflective Practice

ABSTRACT

Programs designed collaboratively between school systems and schools of education provide a context for facilitating the integration of preservice classroom instruction with experience in the field, as well as making university classroom instruction more sensitive to current issues in public education. This paper describes an emerging model program--East Carolina University's Model Clinical Teaching Program (MCTP)--collaboratively planned by university and public school personnel, and discusses the program's purpose, goals, development, curriculum, field experiences, staff development, initial evaluation efforts, and a proposed longitudinal study of graduates. Evaluation results suggest that interns found the experience and associations with lead teachers to be very satisfactory; elementary principals were enthusiastic about lead teachers' professional growth; lead teachers stated that staff-development seminars gave them an opportunity to reflect upon instructional decisions and supervisory practices; this reflective model allowed for in-depth analysis of existing instructional practices; and all parties perceived that as a model for preparing successful, reflective teachers, the MCTP is accomplishing its mission. (LL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED357021

A University and Public School Collaborative Approach to Preparing Elementary Teachers

Betty G. Beacham, Director
Model Clinical Teaching Program
Department of Elementary & Middle Grades
Spec: Curriculum & Instruction
Voice: 919-757-4357

W. Scott Thomson
Assistant Professor
Department of Elementary & Middle Grades
Model Clinical Teaching Program
Spec: Elementary Generalist
Voice: 919-757-4123

Katherine E. Misulis
Assistant Professor
Department of Elementary & Middle Grades
Model Clinical Teacing Program
Spec: Reading Education
Voice: 919-757-6782

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. Beacham

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A UNIVERSITY AND PUBLIC SCHOOL COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO PREPARING ELEMENTARY TEACHERS

Betty G. Beacham, W. Scott Thomson, and Katherine E. Misulis

Introduction

Programs designed collaboratively between school systems and schools of education provide a context for the formation of a strong professional bond. This bond in turn creates a dynamic collegial partnership, which can facilitate the integration of preservice classroom instruction with experience in the field as well as making university classroom instruction more sensitive to current issues in public education. Such partnerships can also facilitate the development of a cadre of competent, experienced classroom teachers who can serve as a clinical faculty while continuing to teach full- or part-time in the schools. These lead teachers can eventually assume a major responsibility for the methods courses, student supervision, and professional portions of the teacher-preparation programs, as well as curricular decisions at the individual building level.

According to Lanier and Little, teacher educators working in collaboration with public school personnel should work together

"to produce (in preservice teachers) a deeper understanding of the way theoretical concepts from psychology, curriculum, and sociology are played out in the classroom. Such understanding of children, subject matter, and school enables teachers to provide better instruction, make better curriculum choices, and participate on a stronger footing in debates." (4:551)

This article describes an emerging model program collaboratively planned by university and public school personnel. Specifically the article addresses purpose, goals, and objectives, program development, and initial evaluation efforts of the project. The concluding section summarizes the perceived benefits to the participants.

Overview of the Program

Purpose: Traditional teacher-education programs generally include a semester divided into five weeks of university course work followed by ten weeks of student teaching. East Carolina University's Model Clinical Teaching Program (MCTP) for elementary majors uses a combination of work. This combination reflects the leadership of both university faculty and public school lead teachers. In doing so, the MCTP integrates the traditional pre-student teaching course work and internship across preservice teachers' final college year. Within this framework theory, application and reflection are integrated into a classroom setting (2). As a result, participants in the MCTP are expected to function more successfully both in completing their traditional student teaching experience and as beginning teachers in regular school settings. Committed to the mission of preparing reflective practitioners, participants in the MCTP ultimately would be expected to display more analytical and positive attitudes toward the professional practice of teaching and to make pedagogically and ethically correct decisions about complex classroom issues.

Goals and Objectives: The goals of the MCTP are to develop, implement, and validate a replicable teacher-education program that is effective with preservice teachers and sustain a collaborative effort between local school systems and the university to examine issues critical to quality. Not only should the project provide research information having significant implications for the improvement of the undergraduate teacher-education process but also for public school in service programs focusing upon educational reform.

Specific objectives are to:

1. Prepare elementary teachers who will be more successful in their first year teaching
2. Develop a model for teacher preparation that can be generalized to other programs
3. Collaboratively develop clinical and field experiences to promote preservice teachers' conceptual growth
4. Develop shared understandings and clinical supervision competencies in cooperating teachers and university supervisors
5. Develop shared understandings of the objectives of teacher education as they relate to public school classrooms
6. Develop shared understandings of the goals and objectives of K-12 public school education as the relate to teacher education programs
7. Incorporate a model of reflective teaching into university and public classrooms

Program Development: At present, this model is functioning within the elementary and middle grades department at East Carolina University. The department has a sufficient number of students to offer a traditional control group for the purpose of comparative evaluation. In addition, forty of the forty-three institutions in North Carolina that offer teacher-education programs have an elementary certification program, which supports its dissemination to other institutions after the program is fully tested.

The program meets two recommendations coming out of the 1985 North Carolina Task Force for the preparation of preservice teachers. The project addresses the cooperative development of one-to two-year clinical programs in the public schools (Recommendation 12) and the use of competent, experienced public school teachers who make up a "clinical faculty" (6). The basic components of the model are(1) an integrated curriculum collaboratively developed by both the university and the public schools, (2) closely supervised year-long field experiences, and (3) continuing staff development for professional growth of the preservice teachers (designated as interns) and the lead teachers (designated as clinical instructors).

Curriculum and Field Experiences: University faculty and public school lead teachers collaboratively plan, deliver, and evaluate a two-semester curriculum composed of philosophy, speciality area content, and pedagogical studies. The extended internship allows for the transfer of theory and knowledge into practice in real classrooms. The students spend the fall semester under the tutelage of clinical instructors and university faculty observing, participating, and learning what it means to be effective teachers in a school organization. The students spend Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays on campus completing required course work; they spend Tuesdays and Thursdays in their assigned classrooms examining how theory becomes practice. During their extended student-teaching practicum in the spring semester, students apply what they have learned in the fall. Throughout the year, weekly seminars are held on site after school with clinical instructors and university personnel to provide the interns with the opportunities to reflect on their classroom experiences. Using the Dewey model, experience + reflection = growth, students begin to understand the complexities of the teaching/learning process (3).

This partnership effort allows public school personnel and university faculty to develop shared understandings of the goals of teacher education, the role of field experiences, and the needs of preservice teachers. By doing so they can work together to identify, plan, implement, and evaluate course work and field experiences to provide the optimum learning environment for the students. Collectively, participants begin to facilitate the clinical study of teaching so that it is

"a continuous exploration and examination of educational possibilities in particular settings under varying conditions... not a static exercise in the demonstration of established ways....[The clinical study of teaching is] a constant quest for productive curricular paths and imaginative teaching strategies through studied experimentation, coordinated analytic assessment and the consideration of alternate approaches... Experimentation must be a matrix in which teacher education takes place if each new generation of teachers is to be innovative in its time. (1:3)

Staff Development for Professional Growth: Current staff development efforts in North Carolina provide the base on which to begin the development of a cadre of public school teachers who can serve as on-site clinical faculty. The state-implemented staff-development efforts provided MCTP participants with a common language and the skills to begin the analysis of teaching. Since 1988, faculty from the university and public schools have jointly undergone Mentor (twenty-four hours) and Effective Teacher Training

(thirty hours) as well as in-depth sessions on the use of the North Carolina Teacher Appraisal System (twenty-four hours) (8).

In addition to this seventy-eight hours of state staff development, participants in the MCTP, for the past four years, have conducted annual needs assessments to determine the thrust on additional staff development activities. University-sponsored seminars conducted twice a semester provide opportunities for the clinical instructors to examine current research, analyze current supervisory practices as they relate to research, and discuss changes in their ability to mentor reflective teaching practices. As a result of the four years of focused staff development, MCTP lead teachers are able to articulate their decision-making processes relative to classroom situations. They understand and support change and experimentation. These teachers also understand the goals of teacher education and the role that public school personnel play in the preparation to preservice teachers.

Evaluation

At the conclusion of the 1990-91 academic term, perceptions of the effectiveness of the MCTP were evaluated using questionnaires, one-to-one interviews, and focus-group interviews. Clinical faculty, students, administrators, and university faculty participated in the end-of-the-year evaluation. These qualitative techniques provided an abundance of data based on written responses to the questionnaires and transcribed dialogue and note taking during the interviews.

Using the Miles and Huberman three-part flow model, the data were subjected to a systematic coding that identified recurring themes and patterns and reviewed and validated the identified patterns (5). The analysis of the data revealed three key theme shared by interns, clinical instructors, university faculty, and building principals:

1. The value of the extended time in the field

Interns, clinical instructors, university faculty, and principals agreed that the year long program supplies the necessary time for practice and reflection that resulted in the interns' professional growth. In addition, all participants agreed that the extended time in the schools allowed the interns to develop confidence, self-esteem, and a heightened awareness of the professionalism of teaching.

2. The value of the reflective model for mentoring and teaching practices

The second theme identified was the value of a clinical experience that emphasized the use of Cruikshank's model for investigation and analysis of teaching practices. Interns stated that the reflective process of observing, teaching, reflecting, and modifying helped them to have a better understanding of teacher actions, of curriculum, and student behavior. Clinical instructors emphasized the change in their teaching and supervisory behaviors as result if the reflective process. Principals agreed that teachers who participated in the program were better mentors, better observers of the classroom environment, and better curricular and instructional decision makers.

3. The value of an intensive staff-development component for clinical instructors

All clinical instructors and building principals shared the belief that the intensive staff-development activities presented by university faculty and outside consultants enabled the teachers to be more effective as mentors and as classroom teachers. The staff-development activities provided opportunities for the teachers and university faculty to converse, share ideas, and develop a shared understanding of public school and teacher-education programs.

Proposed Longitudinal Study of the Graduates: A follow-up study of graduates from the MCTP program and graduates from the traditional program at East Carolina University has been planned and is being conducted during the 1992-93 academic year. Data collected from the Fuller's Level of Concerns Questionnaire and the Gibson and Dembo's Teacher Efficacy Opinionnaire will determine if there are differences in perceptions about the problems of beginning teachers, the professionalism of teaching, and the effect of classroom teachers on achievement levels of students. In addition, one -to-one interviews will be conducted with building principals and mentor team members to determine if differences exist between the two groups of graduates.

Concerns: The analysis of the data also indicated that time was a critical concern. All interns stated that the fall semester was stressful and very time-intensive. Suggestions were made to examine the curriculum to look for overload in course work and field experiences. Clinical instructors and university faculty also experienced a time-intensive fall semester. Suggestions were made to increase support and commitment from the university for the MCTP faculty in the form of official load recognition. In addition, suggestions were made to modify the daily schedules of clinical instructors to provide necessary time to reflect with interns.

Conclusions

Overall, interns found the year-long experience and their association with the lead teachers to be very satisfactory. On the Clinical Instructor Behavior Assessment (CIBA) instrument, the interns rated their lead teachers as either very good (93.8 percent) or satisfactory (6.2 percent).

Elementary principals enthusiastically spoke of the lead teachers' professional growth and of the residual benefits to other teachers and their school as a whole. One principal indicated that all of her teachers involved in the program had improved on their end-of-year evaluation instrument (8).

Lead teachers stated that the staff-development seminars gave them an opportunity to talk about and reflect upon instructional decisions, supervisory practices, and issues critical to quality education for all children. The repeated contact allowed the teachers to develop a sense of emotional support, , kinship, and a belief in shared goals and a mission. The reflective model allowed them to analyze in depth existing instructional practices and to determine if such practices were the most effective for their classroom.

The perceptions of all the parties involved in the evaluation study were that as a model for preparing reflective practitioners who are successful teachers, the MCTP is accomplishing its mission. As graduates of the program, the students are very well prepared to assume roles as Initially Certified Personnel in North Carolina public schools

References

Association of Teacher Educators. Guidelines to Clinical Experiences in Teacher Education. Revised edition. Washington, D.C.: ATE, 1973.

Cruikshank, D.R. Reflective Teaching: The Preparation of Students of Teaching. Reston, Virginia: Association of Teacher Educators, 1987.

Dewey, J. The Relation of Theory to Practice in Education. New York: Teachers College Press, 1904.

Lanier, J.E. and J.W. Little. "Research on Teacher Education." In M.C. Wittrock, Handbook of Research on Teaching. 3d ed. New York: Macmillian, 1986, 527-69.

Miles, M.B., and A.M. Huberman. "Drawing Valid Meaning From Qualitative Data: Toward a Shared Craft." Educational Researcher (May 1984): 20-28.

The Education of North Carolina Teachers: A Report to the 1987 North Carolina General Assembly. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Board of Govenors, 1986.

The MCTP Annual Education Report. East Carolina University: Greenville, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Board of Govenors, 1991.

White, K., G. Stuck, M. Wyne, and W. Coop. Carolina Teaching Performance Assessment System. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1984.